

Public Art Commission Meeting, April 16, 2014, 6pm

PAC Members: Alex Van Praagh , Christopher Sokolowski, Hue Nguyen, Dina Deitsch

Staff: Lillian Hsu, Jeremy Gaucher, Rika McNally

1. Adam Simha Presentation – Bishop Allen and Main

As part of a small 1% project, Simha was chosen by the City parks designer and was tasked with creating an interesting seating upgrade within the small space at the corner of Bishop Allen Drive and Main Street. 1% is 7,000, Park budget adding additional funds to total \$20k for Adam's work. As it exists now, there is an arrangement of granite seating. The granite blocks will remain in place and the artist will use them as a base for additional seating structures.

The artist is proposing seven benches to be made of mild steel (10 gauge) painted with Tnemec 290 brand high-performance paint in colors "Monterey Tile" and "Safety Red". Adam showed images of the designs.

Current cost issues with installation: plan is for 8 drill holes into granite for each bench, using 1 1/2" long flat-headed slotted machine screws (1/4" in diameter) set into epoxy. Artist/staff have had two installation estimates - \$8,000.00 and \$9,625.00. Both of these are very high for the project budget, but this is what is recommended to prevent theft. Rika wonders whether the install method should be reconsidered. In terms of maintenance, the plan is to accept annual surface repair and maintenance, but not major structural repair or replacement if there is structural damage.

The materials and design were chosen with consideration of wear and tear, choke points, accessibility, and vandalism. There may be new plantings to discourage skateboarding across the front along Main Street, but the design leaves the rear edge of granite along the parking lot exposed for this possible purpose. Artist spent many days watching use and traffic and designed the layout to create an interesting visual approach from the major walking paths. Artist built a prototype (yellow), switched to two reds – a dark red and a brick red after seeing the yellow in the actual space. Each granite block moves quite a bit with weather changes, so moved to each seating element on its own block. Ask Rika for Materials support.

Hue- asked about galvanizing. Rika talked about a 3 coat painting system. Adam has experience with steel seating and feels strongly that the chosen system is excellent.

Dina asking about going from the softer forms (as seen in slides) to the newer version with the harder edges. One concern is bombardier plowing will destroy any edges more than 1/4 of an inch over. The budget also limits creating curves. Artist positioned in such a way that visually shows flat edges and outline edges of different benches from most angles.

Hue asks, has plywood been considered? His experience with plywood forms finds that it's expensive for six forms. Would be a better suited to mass produced furniture.

Alex likes the angularity and the sculptural element of it. Chris likes the color as a nod to New England – Artist matching in some regard to color of adjacent buildings.

DPW will be conducting construction this summer. Adam fabrication schedule is area of 8 weeks for steel fab, painted 1 week & 3 weeks drying. Install in 3 days. Plan is to rent a truck and leave pieces overnight.

Chris – asking if one of the light posts could be painted with the red. Adam has asked about that element and at this point it is beyond the budget.

PAC asks if there is an opportunity to revisit form and shape, so that the artist can get closer to his original forms. – LH: over the course of the process, the design has gone through many iterations, and design review, with questions similar to what is being raised by the PAC, and the current design satisfies the artist's design goals and the budget.

Question: What would happen if DPW washed the plaza via routine washing and power washing? Staff should meet with Rob and DPW staff about the future maintenance plan of the space.

Motion to Approve, Hue. All in favor – Aye.

2. New Commission Member – Berta Pentoja

Accepted by City Manager. She will attend next meeting.

5. Next meeting agenda: Identity, language and website.

Staff is considering changing the name of the gallery from CAC Gallery to something different as the Arts Council as a whole is moving away from using 'Council' as an identifier, which also affects CAC. 'Cambridge Arts' is the new preferred identity. Staff has landed on Space, as in Cambridge Arts Space as the way to refer to the gallery space at 344 Broadway. Alex feels that 'Space' is too generic, as there are so many other entities using 'spaces' in their identities in Cambridge. PAC member will give consideration to gallery renaming and will address at next meeting.

6. Other:

- 1% cap Draft of letter handout. LH will send draft. (find cross examples with other cities).
- PAC policy discussion on process will be added on a future agenda.
- Staff will work on dates for next Public Art Tour outing with both boards.
- Board Recommendation: Katherine D'Ignazio
- Public Art Bike Tour May 17

Next meeting: May 14, 6pm

Meeting adjourned: 8:00 pm